

NOTES ON AUSTRALIAN TYPHLOPIDÆ.

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PLATE III.

The present contribution is the outcome of an examination of specimens sent to me from the South Australian Museum by the Director, Dr. E. C. Stirling. Further particulars will be included in a future article. When all available material has been examined, I propose to write on the distribution of the family in Australia, but for the present content myself with the description and illustration of a new and interesting species and some remarks on the identity of other forms.

9*. TYPHLOPS PINGUIS, *sp. nov.*

Habit very stout, of tolerable even thickness. Head short; snout fairly prominent with rather sharp edge. Rostral, above half the width of the head, extending nearly to the level of the eyes, slightly narrowed in front, the portion visible from beneath a little broader than long; nasal incompletely divided, the fissure extending from the anterior half of the second labial; nostrils inferior; preocular narrower than the ocular, in contact with the second and third labials. Eye distinct. Four upper labials. Diameter of the middle of the body about two and twenty times in the total length. Tail as long as broad, ending in an obtuse spine. Twenty scales round the body.

Colors.—In spirits, brownish-yellow above, somewhat lighter beneath.

Dimensions.—Total length, 348 mm. Length of head, 8 mm.; width of head, 10 mm. Width of body, 15.5 mm. Length of tail, 12.5 mm.; width of tail, 12.5 mm.

Hab.—South Australia, one example.

Type.—In the South Australian Museum.

* Previous species-numbers were published as follows:—1-3. Records Austr. Mus. II. (1893), pp. 57-62, pl. XV. 4-8. Proc. Linn. Soc., N.S.W., IX. (1894), pp. 9-14, pl. T.

The circumstance of the nasal fissure being in contact with the second labial, and the scales round the body being in 20 rows, limits the Australian species from which *T. pinguis* requires to be distinguished to three, namely, *T. bituberculatus*, Peters,* *T. leucoproctus*, Boul.,† and *T. wiedii*, Peters.‡ All these are elongate forms, the diameter of the body being contained at most 44, 40, and 42 times respectively in the total length; whereas in *T. pinguis* the diameter is 22 in the length, or nearly twice that of any of the others; it is in fact the stoutest Australian species known.

Should further distinction be required, it may be mentioned that the trilobed snout of the first-named is a character which renders that species unmistakable. The narrow rostral and lateral position of the nostrils sufficiently sunders *T. leucoproctus*, while *T. Wiedii* may be at once recognised by the fact that the nasal fissure extends on to the upper surface of the snout, almost dividing the plate.

10. TYPHLOPS AUSTRALIS, Gray, and T. BICOLOR, Peters.

The collection includes a number of examples which I confess I cannot decide whether to name *T. australis*§ or *T. bicolor*;|| they are certainly one or the other.

A glance at Boulenger's work shows that this writer widely separates the species in his synopsis,¶ the former being included in the main division, characterised by having the "snout rounded," and the latter in that distinguished by the snout having an "obtusely angular horizontal edge."

Referring to the respective epitomised descriptions,** we find that this is the only important difference between the two. The number of scales (22) round the body, the character of the nasal fissure, and the diameter of the body (33-37 and 30-34 respectively) are the same. The enlarged head scales do not appear to be distinguishing features, and the proportional width of the rostral to the head is only slightly different (three-fifths in *T. australis*, and one-half in *T. bicolor*).

* Peters, Monatsb. d. k. Akad. d. W. Berlin, 1863, p. 233; and 1867, p. 708, fig. 4.

† Boulenger, Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist. (6) IV., 1889, p. 361; and Cat. Snakes in Brit. Mus., T., 1893, p. 20, pl. I., fig. 6.

‡ Peters, *loc. cit.*, 1867, p. 24, and Waite, Proc. Linn. Soc., N.S.W., IX., 1894, p. 13, pl. T., figs. 7, 8, and 9.

§ Gray, Cat. of Lizards, Brit. Mus. (1845), p. 135.

|| Peters, *Loc. cit.* 1860, p. 81.

¶ Boulenger, Cat. Snakes in Brit. Mus. 1893, I., pp. 11, 13.

** Boulenger. *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 48.

Although examples showing the extreme degree of acuteness or roundness of the snout may be recognised, the collection exhibits so many intermediate grades that at present I feel inclined to regard the condition as of varietal rather than specific import. Should this view be ultimately maintained, the species will be known as *Typhlops australis*, Gray.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE III.

Fig.

1. *Typhlops pinguis*, *sp nov.* Nat. size.
2. *Typhlops pinguis*, head from above. Twice nat. size.
3. *Typhlops pinguis*, head from below. Twice nat. size.
4. *Typhlops pinguis*, head in profile. Twice nat. size.

